

**INVESTIGATIVE REPORT:**

This report pertains to an investigation of the identification of the burial location, or headstone markings, of a member of the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF) during the Great War 1914-1921.

**SUBMITTED TO:**

[CWGC Canadian Agency](#)

66 Slater Street

Suite 1707

Ottawa Ontario Canada K1A 0P4

Att: [Dominique Boulais](#)

**Report Date:** 18 March 2016

**Reason for Submission:** ("X" means purpose of the report)

<b>Casualty Identification:</b>		<b>Burial Information:</b>	
Confirmed Identity	X	Burial Location Identified	X
Most Probable Identity		Grave Stone Correction	
Questionable Identity		Grave Records Correction	X
Incorrect Identity		Request for CWGC Details	
Other		Other	

**Supporting Documents:** (# refers to attachment number; "I" information provided)

<b>Casualty Identification:</b>		<b>Burial Information:</b>	
Rhuland, William Harold	i	Buttes New British Cemetery	<a href="#">link</a>
85 <sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion	i	West-Vlaanderen	i
Lance Corporal #222586	i	Plot 4 Row A Grave 15	i
Death 30 October 1917	<a href="#">link</a>	Date of Burial / Exhumation	i
Attestation Papers	<a href="#">link</a>	Cemetery Schematic	<a href="#">link</a>
Service Record	n/a	Graves Registration Report	7
Circumstance of Death	1	Concentration of Grave	8
CEF Canada Register	2	Headstone Register	
War Diary Extract(s)	3	Casualty Spreadsheet	
Area Map(s)	4	Trench Map Exhumation	
Trench Map(s)	5	Grave Stone Photograph	
Possible Candidates List	6	Grave Stone Inscription	
Excluded Candidates List		Memorial Inscription/Photo	
Other		Reporting and Review	9

**Summary of Findings:**

The Graves Registration Report form for Plot 4 Row A Grave 15 at the Buttes New British Cemetery, Polygon Wood lists an Unknown Lance Corporal of the 85<sup>th</sup> (Nova Scotia) Battalion of the Canadian Expeditionary Force.

There is only one (1) Lance Corporal of that Battalion that was in that location that is listed on the Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial, as an unknown, and that is Lance Corporal William Harold Rhuland #222586.

## Details of Findings:

The findings are conclusive that the remains in Plot 4 Row A Grave 15 are those of Lance Corporal William Harold Rhuland #22586 of the 85<sup>th</sup> Canadian Infantry Battalion.

The findings are based on the following:

1. Lance Corporal Rhuland is reported to have been killed in action in the attack south of Passchendaele on 30 October 1917 (Attachment #1). At that time, Lance Corporal Rhuland was serving in the 85<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion, 12<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade, of the 4th Canadian Division.
2. There is no known grave reported for Lance Corporal Rhuland of the 85<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion and therefore his name is listed on the Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial for those lost in Belgium with no known grave (Attachment #2).
3. The War Diary of the 85<sup>th</sup> Battalion for October 1917 places the unit exactly in the area where the remains of the Lance Corporal were discovered (Attachment #3). The 85<sup>th</sup> Battalion was attacking at Tiber and Vienna Cottage and moving west-northwest across 28.D.12.c during the attack. The battalion reported heavy machine gun and rifle fire from the enemy. Although not essential for the case, the Appendix of the War Diary for 30-21 October 1917 has been extracted and formatted for [download](#). The document provides an excellent account to the attack on Tiber and Vienna Cottage.
4. A review of the historical records of the Canadian Expeditionary Force in the Great War of 1914-1919 confirms that the area in question is precisely where the 85<sup>th</sup> Battalion was located in late October 1917 (Attachment #4). You will note that Vienna Cottage is marked on this map, directly in the path of the 85<sup>th</sup> Battalion as reported above.
5. A period trench map from the U.K. National Archives clearly depicts the area defined as **28.D.12.c** as being the area that was shown in the battalion war diary and the CEF historical reference, exactly where the remains of the 85<sup>th</sup> Battalion Lance Corporal were discovered (Attachment #5). The locations referred to in the War Diary as "Tiber" and "Vienna Cottage" are clearly shown on this extract.
6. The records of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) show that there were only three (3) Lance Corporals from the 85<sup>th</sup> Battalion that were killed in action at that time and at that location (Attachment #6). Of those three men, two (Davidson #22051 and Courtney #901870) have known graves in the Buttes New British Cemetery and the Passchendaele New British Cemetery, respectively. Only Lance Corporal Rhuland is recorded as having no known grave and thus on the Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial.
7. The Graves Registration Report (GRRF) from the Buttes New British Cemetery indicates that there is an "Unknown L/CPL." of the 85<sup>th</sup> Nova Scotia in Plot 4 Row A Grave 15 (Attachment #7).

8. The Concentration of Graves (Exhumation and Reburials) Burial Return (COG-BR) notes that the Lance Corporal of the 85<sup>th</sup> Nova Scotia was identified by his stripes and signaller flags (Attachment #8).

The detailed Service Record for Lance Corporal Rhuland has not yet been digitized by Library and Archives Canada. If it had been necessary to distinguish between more than one Lance Corporal of the 85<sup>th</sup> Battalion, then it would have been necessary to postpone the release of this report until the Service Record was reviewed. In some cases the “Pay Records” in those records will indicate that the men were serving in a distinct capacity (i.e. a Signaller). In this case, that information is not required for confirmation, as there is only one candidate. When the file is made available from Library and Archives Canada, it will be available from this [link](#).

**Action Required:**

The “Investigative Report” has been prepared in accordance with the procedures and criteria set out by the CWGC, should they wish to make any changes to the commemoration details (Attachment #9).

It is our contention that the evidence is conclusive that the remains of the Unknown Soldier of the 85<sup>th</sup> Battalion (*Nova Scotia Regiment*) that are in Plot 4 Row A Grave 15 are those of Lance Corporal William Harold Rhuland #222586.

# ATTACHMENT #1

1. NO. 222586.	2. RANK OR RATING Lance Corporal	3. SURNAME RHULAND	4. CHRISTIAN NAMES William Harold,
5. UNIT OR SHIP 85th Battalion.	6. DATE OF CASUALTY 30.10.17.	7. H.Q. FILE NO. 649-R-7607.	8. RELIGION Not Stated.
9. CIRCUMSTANCES OF CASUALTY "Killed in Action".			
10. NAME, RELATIONSHIP AND ADDRESS OF NEXT OF KIN			
11. LOCATION OF UNIT AT TIME OF CASUALTY Attack South of PASCHENDALE.			
NOTE.—Items 12, 13 and 14 are not to be completed until grave is permanently located.			
12. CEMETERY	13. LOCATION OF CEMETERY	14. GRAVE LOCATION Grave..... Plot..... Row.....	15. REGISTERED NO. OF GRAVE
16. PHOTOGRAPH OF GRAVE TAKEN	17. EXPOSURE NO.	18. PHOTOGRAPH OF GRAVE AND CEMETERY SUPPLIED TO	
19. FURTHER PARTICULARS ON REVERSE SIDE OF SHEET. HD			

M. P. W. 2013  
25m.-10-22  
H. Q. 1773-09-1103

# ATTACHMENT #2

FORM E-13  
12269-3M-8-9-17

40416

1631 39214

NUMBER 222586 RANK L/Cpl. NAME RHULAND. W. H.

UNIT N.S.R. (85th) NEXT-OF-KIN-

FILE NO. R.L.

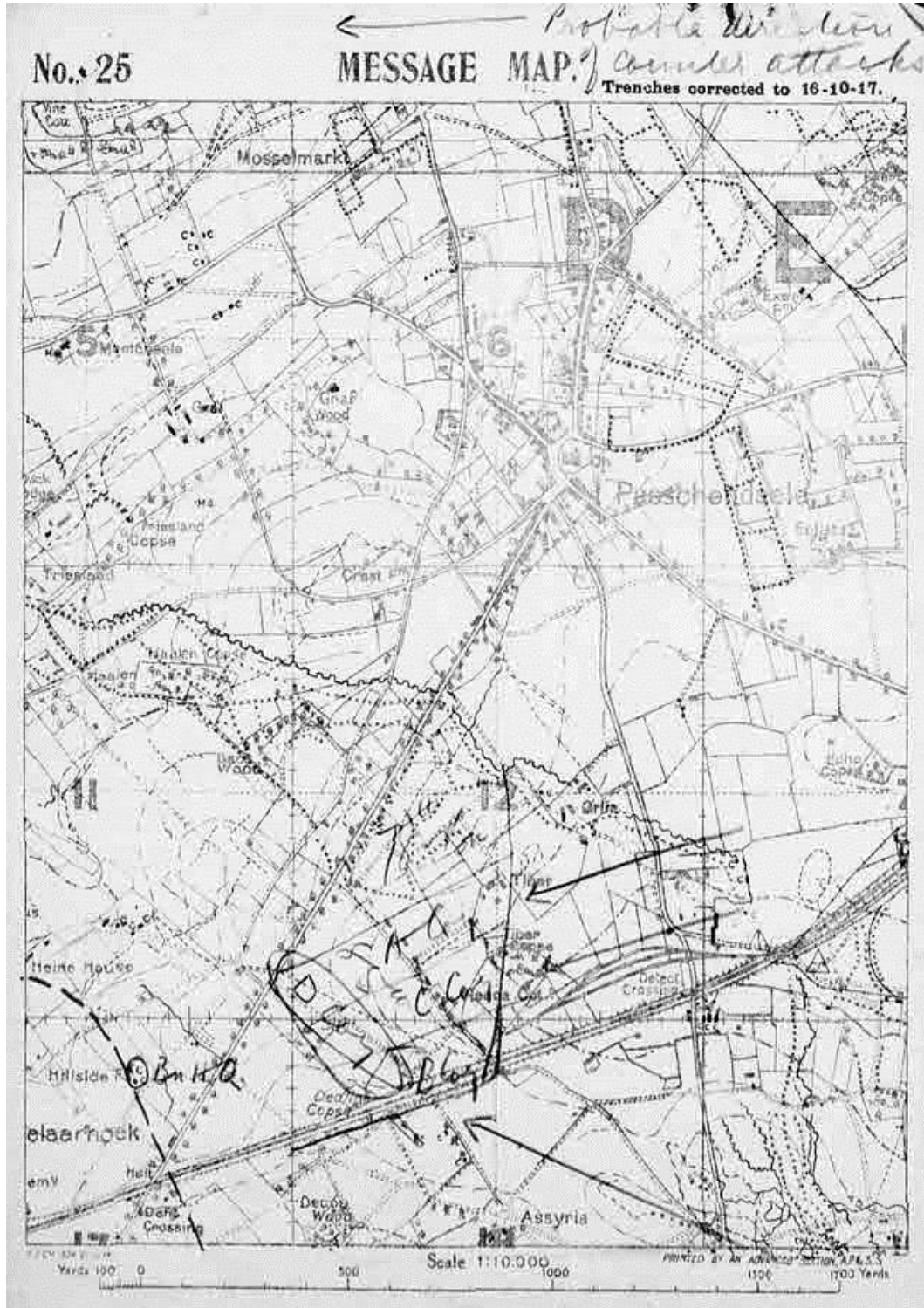
DATE OF DEATH	CAUSE AND PLACE OF DEATH	CAS. SHEET No.
30-10-17	Killed in Action	A. 62

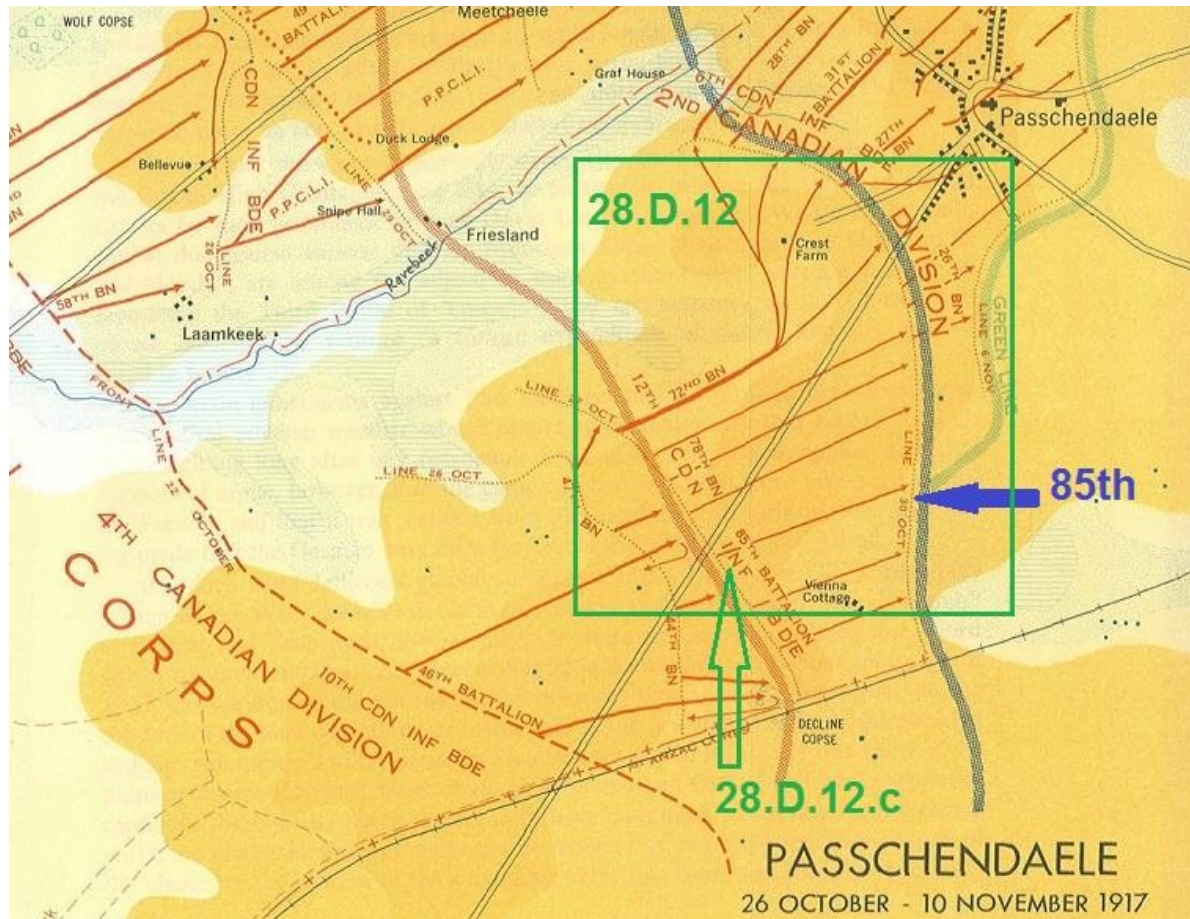
DATE OF BURIAL	PLACE OF BURIAL	DESCRIPTION OF GRAVE
X		

MENIN GATE  
MEMORIAL



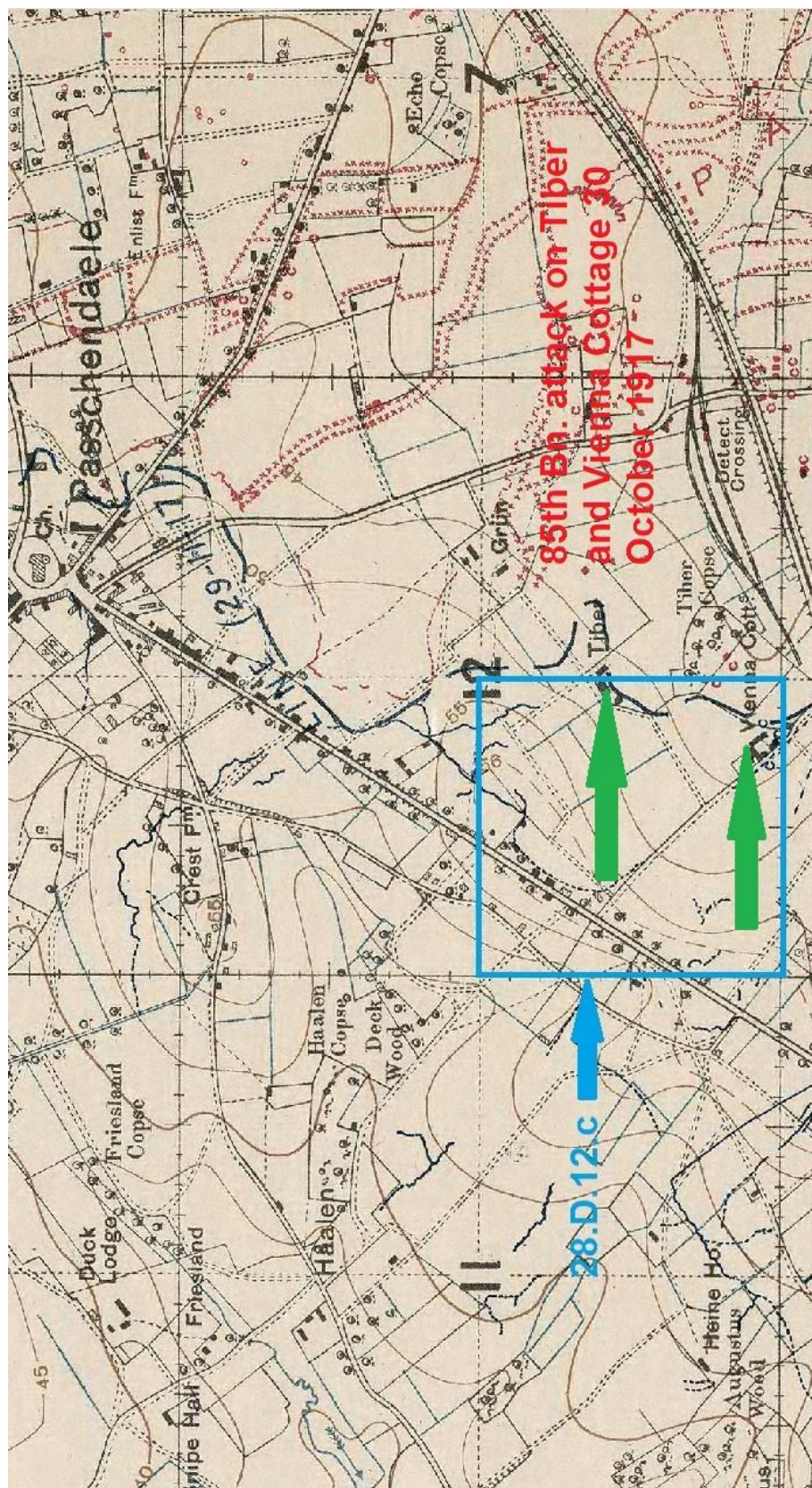
# ATTACHMENT #3







## Buttes New British Cemetery 4.A.15





# ATTACHMENT #6

Surname
☒ Initials
☐ Forename
Country
(commemorated in)
Country
Country
Cemetery or memorial
War
Please select
Date of death: (starting)
26
Oct
1917
Date of death: (ending)
10
Nov
1917

3 record(s) match your search criteria

Name	Rank	Service Number	Date of Death	Age	Regiment / Service	Service Country	Grave / Memorial Reference	Cemetery / Memorial Name	Docs.
DAVIDSON, JAMES WARREN	Lance Corporal	222051	30/10/1917	22	Canadian Infantry	Canadian	III. B. 13.	BUTTES NEW BRITISH CEMETERY, POLYGON WOOD	
COURTNEY, W.A	Lance Corporal	901870	30/10/1917		Canadian Infantry	Canadian	XIV. B. 30.	PASSCHENDAELE NEW BRITISH CEMETERY	
RHULAND, W H	Lance Corporal	222586	30/10/1917		Canadian Infantry	Canadian	Panel 26 - 30.	YPRES (MENIN GATE) MEMORIAL	

# ATTACHMENT #7

COMPREHENSIVE REPORT.

Army Form W. 8372.

## GRAVES REGISTRATION REPORT FORM.

D.A.D.G.R.&E. Central Sub-District. NO. 5. District.

REPORT No. 117 SCHEDULE No. 19/C.

COMMUNE: ZONNEBEKE.

PLACE OF BURIAL THE BUTTS NEW BRITISH CEMETERY POLYGON WOOD.

Documents Certified Correct & Complete

Map Reference Sheet 28.J.10.a.6.8.

Major.

D.A.D.G.R.&E. Central Sub-District.  
NO. 5. District.

The following are buried here:—

Regiment	No.	Name	Rank and Initials	Date of Death	Cross Erected or G. R. U'd.	Plot, Row and Grave
		<u>PLOT 4. ROW "A".</u>				
		UNKNOWN BRITISH			G.R.U.	1 ✓
		-do- -do-			-do-	2 ✓
Australian		UNKNOWN AUSTRALIAN			-do-	3 ✓
-do-		-do- -do-			-do-	4 ✓
-do- 34 <sup>th</sup> Bn	2320	HEATH ✓	PTE J.M	13.10.17	AA/28/13468	5 ✓
CANADIAN		UNKNOWN BRITISH			-do-	6 ✓
		-do- -do-			-do-	7 ✓
Australian		UNKNOWN AUSTRALIAN			-do-	8 ✓
		UNKNOWN BRITISH			-do-	9 ✓
		-do- -do-			-do-	10 ✓
Canadian		UNKNOWN CANADIAN			-do-	11 ✓
-do-		-do- -do-			-do-	12 ✓
		UNKNOWN BRITISH			-do-	13 ✓
Australian		UNKNOWN AUSTRALIAN			-do-	14 ✓
85th. Nova Scotia		UNKNOWN L/CPL. S 1911 R.			-do-	15 ✓
		UNKNOWN BRITISH			-do-	16 ✓

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SLIP CHECKED. Aug 16th 20

(G 31 5) W3160—P2723 100,000 9/19 HWV(P1024) Forms/W3372/3



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FORMS A-4(19-207)B-100,000

21ST COMPANY, LABOUR CORPS. <i>2nd Coy 1st Bn.</i>
Date <i>25 March</i>

CONCENTRATION OF GRAVES (Exhumation and Reburials).

BURIAL RETURN.

Name of Cemetery of Reburial *The-Battle Polygon Wood Cemetery*

Plot	Row	Grave	Map Reference where body found	Was exhumed on grave?	Regimental particulars	Means of Identification	Were any effects forwarded to Base?
4	A	11	ENE Discovered	Yes	Unknown Canadian Soldier	Cross 1358	
"	"	12	" " 12C	"	" "	"	
"	"	13	" " 12C	No	British	"	
"	"	14	" " 1K4	"	Australian	"	
"	"	15	" " 12C	"	The Regt Unknown SS Heavy Section (Tape & Flags)	"	
"	"	16	" " 14K4	"	Unknown British Soldier	"	
"	"	17	" " 12C	"	Australian	Inhumeral	
"	"	18	" " 12C	"	Canadian	SS's Regt Badge Inhumeral	
"	"	19	" " 12C	"	Australian	"	
"	"	20	" " 12C	"	British	"	

*Kennedy letter*  
COMMDG. 21ST COY., LABOUR CORPS

This form to be made out in triplicate, two copies being handed to the D. A. D. (C. of G.) and the other retained by the Burial Officer.



## **ATTACHMENT #9**

This “*Reporting and Review*” attachment is provided to assist all parties in the submission of an investigative report related to the identification of the burial location, or headstone markings, of a member of the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF) during the Great War 1914-1921. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) receives a copy of this report in the event they wish to make changes to the commemoration details. In order to alter the records, the CWGC has set out their criteria for the procedure and submission of cases for review, as detailed below. The CWGC is under no obligation to make changes based on a report.

<b>Procedure:</b>	<b>Guideline Criteria for Submission:</b>
All new identification cases need to be assessed in the first instance by the Canadian Agency (CA) and submissions should go to their office directly. After an initial assessment, if the Agency feels that the case is compelling, they will then pass all the documentation to the Commemorations Team at the Commission's Head Office. Head Office will then review the case and inform the CA of their findings. The Canadian authorities will then decide whether or not any changes to the arrangements for commemoration are required and inform the Commission accordingly.	Cases need to present clear and convincing evidence to prove the identity of a casualty and must not be based on assumption or speculation. The Commission's Commemoration Team will also consider whether the findings of a better informed contemporary investigation are being revisited and if there is any new evidence to consider. By way of example, it is unlikely that the Commission would support a revision of the arrangements for the commemoration where it is apparent that no new evidence is being presented and, a better informed previous decision is being revisited some 100 years later.

The following have participated in the preparation, review and submission of this report on a voluntary basis. Those noted below have read the investigative report and compared it to the criteria set out by the CWGC, as a guiding principle, and have agreed to have their name included as part of the review team. The CWGC may contact any of the reviewers at the e-mail address provided below.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>	<b>E-mail</b>	<b>Contribution</b>
Mics	Private Researcher Great War Forum	<a href="mailto:Mics@gwf">Mics@gwf</a>	Grave Identifier
Richard Laughton	Private Researcher LMC Great War Research Company	<a href="mailto:rlaughton@laughton.ca">rlaughton@laughton.ca</a>	Report Author